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CITRUS FRUIT

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk delivered by Dr. Henry G. Knight, Chief United States Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, at the 8th annual Florida Orange Festival at Winter Haven, Florida, at 1 P.M. January 29, 1936, over the N.B.C. Farm and Home Hour hook-up of 50 radio stations.

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Thank you, Everett Mitchell. And hello, ladies and gentlemen of the Orange Festival, and of the radio audience!

I am delighted to be here today. Glad to get away from the cold weather in Washington. And always glad to take part in the celebration of the harvest festival of our agricultural crops, particularly those like the citrus fruits that contribute so much to the health and happiness of people all over the country.

The United States Department of Agriculture, which I have the honor to represent at this orange festival, has discovered facts helpful to producers and users of citrus fruits just as it has for producers and users of all agricultural products. We have cooperated with agricultural colleges and private organizations interested in the advancement of the citrus industry. My own Bureau of Chemistry and Soils is only one of many branches of the Department of Agriculture helping the producers and consumers of citrus fruits.

As you Florida people know, four years ago, the Congress directed our bureau to set up a citrus byproducts laboratory here at Winter Haven, Florida, the home of the Florida Orange Festival. Already research conducted here has given the public a method for improving the quality of canned orange juice, and canned grapefruit juice. Our chemists have demonstrated how to make wines, brandies, and cordials from citrus juices, and how to make salad oil from grapefruit seed. We have a staff of 5 people here at the Winter Haven Laboratory searching for new and improved ways of using citrus fruits. Results of such research serve both producers and users of oranges and grapefruit--in fact, all citrus fruits.

Orange and grapefruit trees do not produce the same number of boxes of fruit every year. Some years the crop is larger than others. In years of heavy crops the quantity of off-size fruit is large. It's good fruit, but it seldom reaches the market as fresh fruit because the irregular size causes it to bring a low price. One of the purposes of our byproducts laboratory at this point is to try to find ways and means to utilize this off-size fruit. As fresh fruit it will not keep from one season to another. In the form of juice and other byproducts it can be carried over and used. Thus the surplus and off-size fruit becomes available to the public at a reasonable price throughout the year. Laboratory tests made by us and others show that vitamin C, the most important vitamin in orange juice, is not seriously affected by canning when the canning is properly done.

Oranges contain varying amounts of the nutritional factors the human  
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body needs to make it function normally! But their chief value in the diet is as a source of mineral salts and vitamins A, B, and C. Oranges are especially rich in vitamin C, which is so important in the development of bone and teeth.

The aim of our laboratory research is to help citrus people all along the line--from the person who produces the golden fruit to the one who consumes it.

Thank you, good luck, and good bye.